

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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SHAKTOOLIK AND UNALAKLEET SUBDISTRICTS FISHING SCHEDULES AND RESTRICTIONS BEGIN MONDAY, JUNE 17

Chinook salmon runs to southeastern Norton Sound are expected to be very poor this season. The combined Subdistricts 5 and 6 Chinook salmon run could be as low as 4,500 fish this season, and this level of abundance is not sufficient to justify sport fishery harvests or support historical Chinook salmon harvest rates. Preemptive restrictions must be implemented at the start of this season to significantly reduce harvest rates of Chinook salmon and ensure that escapement goals are achieved in Shaktoolik and Unalakleet River drainages. In addition to restrictions, subsistence users are also strongly encouraged to redirect harvest pressure on other more numerous species this season, such as chum salmon which are anticipated to be abundant in southern Norton Sound. Alternative measures will be implemented in each subdistrict based on recommendations from the department and input from subsistence users in each community. Gear restrictions and subsistence fishing schedules for the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts are as follows:

Shaktoolik Subdistrict

Subsistence salmon fishing with set gillnets is allowed 7 days a week in all waters of the Shaktoolik Subdistrict through Sunday, June 16.

Shaktoolik Subdistrict Marine Waters: Effective 6:00 p.m. Monday, June 17, subsistence salmon fishing with set gillnets will be allowed for two 48-hour periods per week. Periods will be from 6:00 p.m. Mondays to 6:00 Wednesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Thursdays to 6:00 p.m. Saturdays. During these 48-hour periods, subsistence fishing for salmon is limited to set gillnets with a mesh size no greater than 6 inches.

Shaktoolik River Drainage: Effective 8:00 a.m. Monday, June 17, subsistence salmon fishing with set gillnets will be restricted to the use of gillnets with a mesh size of 4 ½ inches or less. Sport fishing for Chinook salmon in the Shaktoolik River drainage will also be restricted to catch-and-release and the use of bait is prohibited beginning Monday, June 17.

Unalakleet Subdistrict

Subsistence salmon fishing with set gillnets is allowed 7 days a week in all waters of the Unalakleet Subdistrict through Sunday, June 16.

Unalakleet Subdistrict Marine Waters: Effective 6:00 p.m. Monday, June 17, subsistence salmon fishing with set gillnets will be limited to two 24-hour periods per week with unrestricted gillnet mesh. Periods in the Unalakleet Subdistrict will be from 6:00 p.m. Mondays to 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays to 6:00 p.m. Saturdays.

Unalakleet River Drainage: Effective 8:00 a.m. Monday, June 17, subsistence salmon fishing with set gillnets will be restricted to set gillnets with a mesh size of 4 ½ inches or less. Additionally, subsistence salmon fishing with set gillnets in the Unalakleet River drainage is only allowed during two 36-hour periods per week beginning Monday, June 17. Periods will be from 8:00 a.m. Mondays to 8:00 p.m. Tuesdays and from 8:00 a.m. Fridays to 8:00 p.m. Saturdays. Sport fishing for Chinook salmon in the Unalakleet River drainage will also be restricted to catch-and-release and the use of bait is prohibited beginning Monday, June 17.

Once the Chinook salmon run begins, inseason management will be based upon escapement counts and subsistence fishing reports. Fishing restrictions may be relaxed or further restrictions may be necessary depending on run assessment.

Subsistence salmon fishermen are reminded that set gillnets used in the marine waters of Norton Sound are limited to 50 fathoms or 300 feet in length. You may not tie two 50 fathom nets together for subsistence fishing. Also, gillnet buoys must be properly and legibly marked with the fishermen's name and phone number clearly marked on buoys. Copies of subsistence fishing schedules and gear restrictions for the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistrict waters will be available at the Unalakleet field office, UNC Garage, and Shaktoolik Native Store.

For any questions regarding upcoming fishing schedules or restrictions please contact Fish & Game in Nome at 443-5167 or 1-800-560-2271, or the Unalakleet Fish & Game field office at 624-3921. Good luck, good fishing and be safe.